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# THE GREATEST THING EVER KNOWN



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BY

RALPH WALDO TRINE

AUTHOR OF

"IN TUNE WITH THE INFINITE," "WHAT ALL THE  
WORLD'S A-SEEKING"



*The moment we fully and vitally realize  
WHO AND WHAT WE ARE, we then begin  
to build our own world even as God  
builds His.*



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## CONTENTS.

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	PAGE.
I. THE GREATEST THING EVER KNOWN . . . . .	5
II. DIVINE ENERGIES IN EVERY-DAY LIFE . . . . .	23
III. THE MASTER'S GREAT BUT LOST GIFT . . . . .	29
IV. THE PHILOSOPHER'S RIPEST LIFE THOUGHT . . . . .	42
V. SUSTAINED IN PEACE AND SAFETY FOREVER . . . . .	51



# THE GREATEST THING EVER KNOWN.

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## I.

THE greatest thing ever known — What is it? Full surely the answer must be one that is absolutely universal, both in its nature and in the possibilities of its application. It must be one that can be accepted wholly and unreservedly, not only by a single individual, but even by bodies of individuals, be they the originators of any particular school of Ethics, the followers of any particular system of Philosophy, or even the adherents of any great system of Religion. It must be one so true in itself that it can be accepted by all men alike the world over.

And again, it must be an answer that is true for no particular period of time, but equally true for all time — an answer that was true not only for yesterday, that is true for to-day, that may be true for to-morrow, but one equally true for yesterday, to-day, and forever. In laying our foundation, therefore, it must be laid upon something as true and as certain as Life itself, and as eternal as Everlasting Life.

What is as true and as certain as Life itself? Life, only Life. And what do we mean by this answer? Let us give it for a moment our most careful consideration, for upon what we find here depends and rests all that is to follow. Let us start, then, with that in regard to which

all can agree ; something taken not from mere tradition, from mere hearsay, but something that comes to us from no source other than our own interior consciousness, our own reason and insight. In other words, let us make our approach, not from the theological standpoint, but from that which is far more certain and satisfactory — the philosophical.

Then, and then only, will we allow pure reason to be our guide, and then by having as the earnest desire of both mind and heart, truth, truth for its own sake, and then for the sake of its influence upon every-day life, we will thus allow pure reason to be illumined by the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. In the degree that we open ourselves to and are true to this are we on sure and safe ground, for thus are we going directly to the source and the only source of all *true* revelation. In the degree, on the other hand, that we close ourselves or become untrue to this are we on uncertain and dangerous ground, and liable to find ourselves hopelessly floundering in the quagmire of theological traditions and speculations and doubts, of which the world has already seen so much. Pure reason, therefore, shall be our guide — pure reason illumined by the Inner Light.

Again, then, What is Life ? Being is Life. Life is Being. Being, therefore, is our starting-point, and indeed our very foundation itself.

Each can form his own idea of being, so that in reality it needs no defining. By it we mean that self-existent principle of Life and all that attends it, without beginning and without end, the Power that animates all and so that is the Life of all. In short, we can scarcely define Being, if indeed it can be defined, without using the word Life,

and indeed without identifying the two. Being and Life, then, are one and the same.

It is Being that projects itself into ex-istence. Being, acting through its own intelligence, prompted by love, projected by will, goes out and *takes* form. We cannot say that it enters into form, for until it projects itself into ex-istence *there is no form*, but form comes by virtue of Being, the self-existent Principle of Life and Power, manifesting itself in ex-istence. So in a sense Life, which is one with Being, is the soul and form, of whatever nature the body.

Only as Being projects itself into ex-istence are we able to know it. We can know the fact that Being *is*, but only as it manifests itself in form are we able to know *it itself*.

Being is *one*, not many. As Being is the source of all Life, there is, then, only one Life, and this Being is the Life of all. "The one Divine Being; and this alone is the true Reality in all Existence, and so remains in all Eternity." And there is nothing real that is, or, indeed, that can be, outside of it. True, then, are the words of one of the most highly illumined philosophers of modern times — "Thus we have these two elements: Being, as it is essentially and in itself; and Form, which is assumed by the former in consequence of Existence. But how have we expressed ourselves? What is it that assumes a form? Answer: Being, as it exists in itself, without any change whatever in its inward, Essential Nature. But what, then, is there in Existence? Answer: Nothing else than the One Eternal and Unchangeable Being, besides which there can be nothing."

This Being which is Infinite is in truth, then, the Infinite Being, and this Infinite Being is what we mean by

God — each using the term that appeals most to himself. Literally, the I Am, as is signified by the name Jehovah, which is derived in the Hebrew from the word To Be. God, then, is the Infinite Being, the Infinite Spirit of Life which fills all in ex-istence with himself alone, so that all is He, since He is All. If God is all, then all *must* be He, and from this fact there is no escape, and no other conclusion can be arrived at which does not do violence to all rational thought. There are those — and to such these pages are not addressed, for so limited are they in comprehension, or so closed to truth and hence so engrossed in bigotry, that they either can or will see nothing that may be opposed to their present ideas — there are those who say that God is all, and immediately begin to fill up the universe with that which God is not.

Again, there are those open to and eagerly seeking for the highest truth who say: But evil is not God, and how then can God be *all*, for surely there is such a thing as evil. Certainly evil is not God, nor has God anything to do with evil. Evil is simply the result of the temporary perversion of the good, and as such must either cease or in time die at its own hands. As such, then, it has no *essential* reality, for that which has essential reality has neither beginning nor end.

*Man* is the only one who has to do with evil, he alone is its author; man, who in his thought separates himself from Divine Being, in whom alone true happiness and blessedness can be found. Regarding the mere bodily existence as his real life, he tries to find pleasure and happiness entirely through these channels, and many times by violating the higher laws of his being, and thus what we term evil enters in. But though man has perfect freedom in all his thoughts and acts, God will suffer



no such violation. And so, from the pain and suffering that result from the violation of the higher laws of his being, he is pushed on in his thought and through this in his life to the Reality of his being, and finds that only in conscious union with God true pleasure and blessedness lie, as God surely intends. True, then, evil is not God, nor has God anything to do with evil; for man alone has to do with it, so long, and only so long, as he lives his life out of a conscious union with the life of God.

Infinite Being, God, then, is the one and the only Life. You and I in our true selves are Life. It cannot be truly said that we *have* life, for we *are* Life; Life that manifests itself in the form in ex-istence that we denominate by the term body. And as the Infinite Being, the Infinite Life, God, is the I Am, the life of all in ex-istence, then we indeed are parts of the Infinite Being, the Infinite Life, the I Am, the very God himself. And thus it is that your life and mine is one with the life of God. By this we do not mean the mere body, but the Real Self that takes to itself the form—body. It is utterly impossible that there be any real life that is not one with the life of God. And in this sense it is true that the life of man and the life of God are essentially and necessarily one and the same. In essence they are one and the same; they differ not in quality, for this it is impossible rationally even to conceive of. There is a difference—it is a difference simply in *degree*, not in essence or kind. It is only by reason of our own thought that our life is separate from the life of God, only by reason of our own thought that we live in this separation, if indeed we can use the term *live* where the *full* life is not consciously realized and

enjoyed. Truly, then, "In Him we live and move and have our being."

We never could have been, and never can be, other than Divine Being. And I fully agree with the thought expressed in a recent letter from Prof. Max Müller in which he says: "I cannot accept Athanasius when he says that we can become gods; man cannot say, become God, because he is God; what else could he be, if God is the only true and real being?"

How is it, then, I hear it asked, that man has the limitations that he has, that he is subject to fears and forebodings, that he is liable to sin and error, that he is the victim of disease and suffering? There is but one reason. He is not living, except in rare cases here and there, in the *conscious realization* of his own true Being, and hence of his own true Self. We must *in thought* be conscious of who and what we are before the qualities and powers of our real being, and hence our real selves, actualize or even manifest themselves. Says one of the most highly illumined seers of modern times: "The True Life and its Blessedness consists in a union with the Unchangeable and Eternal; but the Eternal can be apprehended *only by Thought*, and is in no other way approachable by us."

Thought is the atmosphere, the element, in a sense the very substance, of the phase of Divine Being that we call human life. How much it is likewise that of other forms of Divine Being in ex-istence, as we see it in the various manifestations of life around us, we cannot be so fully certain of. But certain it is that through thought, and through thought alone, we are able to conceive of Divine Being as the Infinite Spirit and Essence of Life, and then to see clearly that it is the Life of our Life, and then



to live in the realization of our oneness with it, and in this way allow the Divine Word to become incarnate in us by being thus fully and completely manifest in us, precisely as it became manifest and hence incarnate in the Christ Jesus, as we shall hereafter find.

When Divine Being manifests itself in physical human form, its inward essential nature or reality changes not, for this from its very nature it is impossible for it in any way to do. It does, however, have to manifest itself through the agency of physical senses, and precisely for this reason is it that for a time our real inward Essential Nature and Life is concealed from us, but this again only by reason of our limited comprehension.

When we are born into the world of Nature we see and cognize through and by means of the physical senses, and the natural physical world becomes to us for a time the *real* world. By and by, however, through these very senses we are able to conceive of the One and Eternal Source of Life as our real and therefore our only life, and then through them to hold ourselves in this living realization. Hence, first that which is natural and *then* that which is spiritual is necessarily as well as literally and philosophically true. Happy, however, is the man who dwells not long as the purely natural man, but is early transformed into the spiritual, and so in whom the Divine Word early becomes incarnate.

Blessed state indeed, says the thoughtful and earnest seeker for the best things in life, and more to be prized than all else besides; but if this state is really possible of realization, what can be said regarding the method of entering into it? There is only one thing in all the wide universe that will enable you as well as all the world to do it effectually. "Be ye therefore trans-

formed by the renewing of your minds." This is the force, the transforming power, so far as the form of life we denominate by the term human is concerned, this and this alone.

True, then, and most welcome is the great fact of facts that the world is beginning to become so conscious of to-day, that "The mind is everything; what you think, you become." Mortal mind? says one. Yes and no. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as mortal mind — there is only Divine Mind. When in our own thought, and by reason of our limited comprehension, we shut ourselves off and look upon ourselves as individual physical beings, we give birth to a temporary mode of thought that might well be termed mortal mind, or, rather, the product of mortal mind. But it is at first natural, and it is only by using this "mortal mind" that it is able to be transformed, and hence renewed into the Divine Mind. So by wisely using that which we have, the natural, we are transformed from that which is most apparent, and consequently that which we think we are, the mortal, the physical, into that which from all eternity we in reality are, and never except in our own minds can get away from, — the Spiritual, the Divine.

It is through this instrumentality that the Divine Life within us, the Divine Life with all its ever-ready-to-break-forth glories and powers, is enabled to be changed from a mere passive and hence potential actuality, and to burst forth into the full splendors of conscious, active life. Surely, then, thought rightly directed and rightly used has within it the true regenerating and hence redeeming power; through it and it alone are we able to make for ourselves a new heaven and a new earth, or, rather, by thus finding the kingdom of God, and through it entering

into the conscious realization of the heavenly state, are we able to make for ourselves a new earth by actualizing the kingdom of Heaven in our lives while living on the earth, and which, when once truly realized, can never be lost.

The majority of people are not awake; it is only here and there that we find one even partially awake. Practically all of us, as a result, are living lives that are unworthy almost the name of lives, compared to those we might be living, and that lie within our easy grasp. While it is true that each life is in and of Divine Being, hence always one with it, in order that this great fact bear fruit in individual lives, each one must, as we have already said, be conscious of it, *he must know it in thought*, and then live continually in this consciousness.

An eagle has been chained for many months to the perch just outside of his cage; so long has he been conscious of the fact that he is bound by the little silver chain which holds him that he has given up all efforts to escape, almost forgetting, perhaps, that the power of flight is longer his. One day a link of the little chain opens, but, living so long in the consciousness that he is held in captivity, he makes no effort to escape. The freedom of the heavens is now his, were he only conscious of his power. But day after day he sits sullenly longing for freedom, but remaining a captive still. One morning, however, he ventures a little farther out on his perch than usual, when suddenly a strange consciousness is his—he sets his wings, and the captivity which has held him for months will perchance know him no more forever.

And so it is with man. On account of the false gods that tradition and prevailing theology have brought him

he knows not himself, and not knowing himself he knows neither his powers nor his possibilities. The human soul is held captive. An opaque physical structure is about all that he can be said truly to give evidence of. The day comes, however, when in his thought he moves out a little farther than is usual, then a little farther and a little farther. The Inner Light is now moving within, he catches at first a little glimpse of his real Essential Being, then a little more and a little more, and by and by the fact of his essential oneness with the Infinite Life and Power bursts in upon, illumines, and takes possession of his soul. In bewilderment, and almost afraid to utter it at first, he cries aloud, "O God, I am one with Thee!" Enraptured by this new consciousness, he holds to the thought of this oneness, and living continually in this thought his life forever after flows steadily on in one constant realization of his oneness with Divine Being. And so "the first man, [which] is of the earth earthy," is changed into "the second man, [which] is the Lord from Heaven," and thereafter the Christ sits enthroned.

Compared with the new life that he is now continually living, the old life of ignorance with its consequent limitations, which can now know him no more forever, deserved only the name of death, for, strictly speaking, he was indeed dead unto life, and only he who lives in the conscious realization of his oneness with the One and Only Life can be said truly to be born into Life. He is born into the world and lives in the world, but into consciously real and eternal *Life* he has not yet entered. He is born the Adam man, but within him the Christ man has not awakened, or, rather, he has not yet awakened to the Christ within, and so the Christ man is not



yet born, and sitting therefore in darkness he knows not yet the glorious realities of life.

"I am thine own Spirit" are the words that the Infinite Father by means of the Inner Voice is continually speaking to every human soul. He who *will* hear *can* hear, and through it step out into fulness of life.

We hear much in the prevailing crude and irrational theology in regard to the "fall of man;" but it is only as man has departed from the Inner Light, and gone after false man-made gods, that anything that might rationally be termed a "fall" has come about. Separating our lives in thought from their oneness with Divine Life is what constitutes, and what alone will ever constitute, the fall of man. But the teaching that has come to us through past generations, which has as its dominant keynote poor worm and miserable sinner, death and the grave, is as false as it is pernicious and therefore damnable in its influences. These old thoughts and words have had the influence of taking heaven out of earth and populating the earth with doubt, and error, and sin, and crime. New and true thoughts and words will make literally a new heaven and a new earth.

Man is essentially Divine, part and parcel of the Infinite God, and so, essentially good. When he severs his connection in consciousness with the Divine, then and then only do doubt, and error, and sin, and crime, with their consequent pain, suffering, disease, and despair, enter into his life. Only a pure and radical infidel — by this we mean one who is in reality such, for there are many who are called infidels, even by many avowed religionists, who live a far truer religion than they themselves live — can rationally hold to the doctrine of original sin, with its

consequent poor worm and miserable sinner. The religious teacher who professes to believe in God as the One Divine and Supreme Being, and at the same time holds to this irrational doctrine, is many times more a disciple of the Devil, whom he recognizes and whose power he evidently respects, than he is of the Infinite God in whom he *professes* to believe. He and he alone it is who finds a place for what he and his theology term the Devil. The one who truly believes in God as the only true and real being and the source of all life and power can indeed find no place for the Devil. He sees and recognizes the evil that comes from lives that lose for a time their conscious connection with the Supreme Source of their being, but he can find no place for any other *essential and abiding* Reality.

And as this separation from God is made entirely through the instrumentality of the mind, he sees that making one's conscious connection again with God — the true and only true redemption — must also be made through the instrumentality of the mind. Believing in the God in whom he believes, aye, *knowing the God whom he knows*, he sees no place for an atonement in the sense of appeasing the wrath of an angry God. Knowing the God whom he knows, he shares not in those barbaric, not to say idiotic, notions. He does see, however, that redemption can and must come through living in the conscious at-one-ment with the Father's life. He recognizes it as the natural method that the Adam man be first born with freedom of thought and consequently freedom of action, and that from him the Christ man then comes forth into consciousness. He recognizes that it is God's, and consequently nature's and evolution's, method that "the first man is

of the earth earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven." He recognizes the fact that kittens are born blind, not because their parents or even their grand-parents sinned, but because it is simply *natural* for them to be born blind, and that in process of time their eyes will open. He also recognizes that, on account of our limited comprehension, the "natural" appears first and then the "spiritual," but in reality the spiritual is from the very first incarnated within, and only because it is can it in process of time, either sooner or later, assume the ascendancy by changing from potential into active life.

Once in a while there comes into the world one who from the very first recognizes no separation of his life from the Father's life, and who dwells continually in this living realization; and by bringing anew to the world this great fact, and showing forth the works that will always and inevitably follow this realization, he becomes in a sense a world's savior, as did Jesus, who, through the completeness of his realization of the Father's life incarnate in him, became the Christ Jesus. He in this way pointed out to the world how all men can enter into the realization of the Christ-life and thus be saved from all impulse to sin. And so instead of coming to appease the vengeance of an angry God — difficult for one who has any adequate conception of God even to conceive of — he brought to the world, by exemplifying in his own life as well as by teaching to all who will hear his *real message*, the method whereby all of us can enter into the full and complete realization of our oneness with the life of the tender and loving Infinite Father.

Redeemed from the bondage of the senses through which alone sin comes, and born into the heavenly state, into life eternal, is every one who comes into the same

relations with the Father, and hence into the same realization of his oneness with the Father's life, that Jesus came into. It is difficult, however, to see how any one will be redeemed from the bondage of sin and enter into the heavenly state simply by believing that Jesus entered into it while here. No amount of believing that he lived the life he lived will take any one into the heavenly state, but living the life that Jesus lived will take every one who lives it there, in any age and in any clime, even whether or not he knows that such a man as Jesus ever lived.

The world has less need for a perverted and hence perverting doctrine of "vicarious atonement" that bodies of men have formulated by either intentionally or ignorantly dragging the teachings, as also the life, of the Master down to a purely material interpretation — less need, I repeat, has the world for this diabolical doctrine than it has for the great vitalizing fact of a conscious, living at-one-ment with the Father's life, as every one whose spiritual sense is at all unfolded will inevitably get from the life and teachings of the Master, if indeed he is more interested in the real living truth that he taught than he is in the almost numberless man-made theological theories and dogmas regarding it.

In order that we may ever keep our standing ground clearly in mind, let us now gather into a single view the substance of what we have endeavored thus far to present.

From everlasting to everlasting is Being, self-existent, without beginning and without end. Depending upon nothing outside of itself and the essential essence, the



very life of all that through it comes into ex-istence, it is therefore Infinite Being. Existing at first as pure spirit, it is therefore Divine Being. Literally the I Am, the Divine Jehovah, the Infinite God. Then, animated by love and acting through its own volition, it projects itself into ex-istence and assumes the various forms we see in the universe about us, including we ourselves. But by the act of projecting itself into ex-istence, the Infinite Divine Being does not change in the least its essential inner nature, as indeed it would be impossible for it to do. What, then, in reality is there in ex-istence? Only Divine Being, the Infinite God in all his manifold manifestations; and thus it remains through all eternity, as must necessarily be from its very nature, and otherwise it could not be. God, then, is the Infinite Being, the Infinite Spirit which is the essential essence, the life of all, which therefore fills all the universe with Himself alone, so that all is He, since He is all.

But when Divine Being incarnates itself in flesh and forms for its use a physical body — a human body, as we call it — it necessarily has to manifest through the instrumentality of physical senses, and, though Divine Being is infinite, the vision of man is limited, and for a time his true inner Life (always Divine Being) is concealed from him, for he naturally interprets everything from the standpoint of the physical. First that which is natural, and man knows himself only as a natural physical being, differing not essentially from the material universe about him. As he looks out, however, he sees that he differs from other forms in existence, in that he has a mind through which thought is engendered, a mind that grows by using. Then contemplating himself and longing for the truth of his existence, gradually

there dawns upon his consciousness the fact that his life is Divine Being, that other than this it has never been — except in his own mind when in his thought he mistook the mere physical form in existence as the real essential life itself, thus separating his life from the Infinite Divine Life. He thus realizes that in God he lives, moves, and has his being, that God is the life of his life, his very life itself; and thus he comes in time into the conscious, living realization of his oneness with the Infinite Life and Power. And so we find it true — first the natural man, then the spiritual.

Through thought, and through thought alone, the second man, the Lord from Heaven, is gradually evolved out of the first man, which is of the earth earthy. Through a perfectly natural process of evolution, out of the first man Adam — sense perception — is evolved the Christ man — Divine self-realization. Impossible, however, is it for anything to be evolved that was not first involved; and so man finds that the Lord Christ has always been within and he has known it not.

It is the same to-day as it was many years ago with Jacob when he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not." This and all that followed he found simply by using the stones of the place where he was; for with the stones of the place he made for himself a pillow, and it was while sleeping on this pillow that he beheld the ladder set upon the earth and reaching to the heavens, upon which the angels were ascending and descending, and thus it was that he entered into communion with the life of the heavens. Later, then, he transformed the pillow into a pillar that served as a guide to other men.

And so with every human soul — we must use simply

the stones of the place where we are. The only stones with which human life can build is thought. It and it alone is the moulding, the creative power — earnest, sincere thought of the place where we are, this constitutes the stones of the place where we are and with which we can make a pillow upon which for the time being to rest. Through this and this alone will the life of the heavens be opened to us; for angels ascending — aspiration — will in time bring to us angels descending — inspiration. Then with Jacob of old we will cry out, “Behold, the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.” Then our pillow, the thought that gives us the knowledge that the Infinite Divine Life is always within, the Essential Essence of the human soul itself, we can convert into a pillar, a pillar that will be a guide to lead other men into this same realization and life.]

And so the entire problem of human life is wonderfully simple and easy if we are but true to the highest within us, and keep ourselves free from the various perplexing and mystifying theological theories and dogmas, which ordinarily give merely a promise of spiritual awakening, realization, and power in some other form of life, rather than actualizing it here and now in this life.

But only as man becomes conscious of the Lord Christ within, only as he becomes conscious, — realizes in thought that he is one with the Infinite Life and Power, — does this great fact become a moving and mighty force in the affairs of his daily life. Until this is true he remains in the condition of the eagle, which, though unchained, thinking nevertheless that he was still chained, remained in captivity when the freedom of the heavens awaited simply the spreading of his wings.

Although the answer to our title has been given both in lines and between lines long before this, it may be an aid to us, especially in making practical what is to follow, to put it as best we can into a definite form ( The greatest thing ever known—indeed, the greatest thing that ever can be known—is that in our real essential nature we are one with the Infinite Life and Power, and that by coming into, and dwelling continually in, the *conscious living realization* of this great fact, we enable to be manifested unto and actualized within us the qualities and powers of the Divine Life, and this in the exact degree of the completeness of this realization on our part. )

## II.

## DIVINE ENERGIES IN EVERY-DAY LIFE.

AND what, let us ask, is the result and hence the value of this realization? For unless it is of value in the affairs of every-day life, it is then a mere dead theory, and consequently of no real value. *Use* must be the final test of everything, and if it has no actual use, or if no visible results follow its use, we had better not spend time with it, for it is then not founded upon truth.

First, let it be said, it is not the mere intellectual recognition, merely the dead theory, but the conscious vital and living realization of this great truth, that makes it of value, and that makes it show forth in the affairs of every-day life. This it is, and this alone, that gives true blessedness, for this is none other than the finding of the kingdom of God, and when this is once found and lived in, all other things literally and necessarily follow. Through this the qualities and powers of the Divine Life are more and more realized and actualized, and through their leading we are led into the possession of all other things.

He who comes into this full and living realization of his oneness with the Divine Life is brought at once into right relations with himself, with his fellow-men, and with the laws of the universe about him. He lives now in the inner, the real life, and whatever is in the interior must necessarily take form in the exterior, for all life is



from within out. ] There is no true life in regard to which this law does not hold. And if the will of God is done in the inward life, then is it necessarily done in all things of the outward life, and the results are always manifest. Thus and thus alone it is that men have become prophets, seers, and saviors; they have become what the world calls the "elect" of God, because in their own lives they first elected God and lived their lives in His life. And thus it is that to-day men can become prophets, seers, and saviors, for the laws of the Divine Life and the relations of what we term the human life to it are identically the same to-day as they have been in all time past and will be in all time to come. The Divine Being changes not; it is man alone who changes.

It is solely by virtue of man's leaving the inner life of the spirit and thus departing from God, or by virtue of his not yet finding this real life, that sin and error, pain and disease, fears and forebodings, have crept as naturally and as necessarily as that effect follows cause into his life; only by closing his eyes to the inner light, by shutting his ears to the inner voice, that, although he has eyes to see, yet he sees not, and, although he has ears to hear, yet he hears not. And it is only by uniting his life with the Divine Life, and thus living again the life of the spirit, that these things will go, even as they have come.

All the evil, unhappiness, misery, and want in the world are attributable to man, and are the direct results of his taking his life, either consciously or unconsciously, either directly or indirectly, out of harmony with the Power that works for righteousness and consequently for wholeness and perfection. } And when our life is lived in the life of God, and God's will therefore becomes our

will, all is and necessarily must be well with us, for contrary to His will it is impossible that anything should ever come to pass. And thus it is that he who seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness shall have all other things added unto him. The soul, the real life, is Divine, and by allowing it to become translucent to Infinite Spirit by living continually in this conscious union with Divine Being it reveals all things to us. Things become hidden, mysteries fill and uncertainties pervade life only as we turn away from the inner light and life; there is nothing that is hidden of itself; to God all things are known, and he who consciously lives his life in the life of God sees with the Divine vision that reveals all things to him. He who lives continually under this Divine guidance enters thereby into the realm of the highest wisdom, and even in the most trivial things of every-day life he never finds himself in a state of doubt or perplexity, for he always knows what to do and how to do it.

He has no regrets for the past, because before he entered into his present consciousness he was in a sense dead unto life, and all regrets that he might have for the past are now swallowed up in the joys that the new birth that has brought him into fulness of life continually spreads before his every step. He has neither fears nor forebodings in regard to the future, for he knows that contrary to God's will, which is now his will, nothing can ever come to pass. Peace, therefore, a full and abiding peace, is continually his.

As all life is from within out, and as this is absolutely true in regard to the physical body, the fountain of Divine Life that has been opened up within him, which of itself can admit of no disease or imperfection of any

kind, will allow only healthy conditions to be externalized in his body; and where unhealthy conditions have been built into it before his entrance into the new life, the life that now courses through it will in time drive them out by entirely replacing the diseased structure with that which is pure and whole.

A continually growing sense of power is his, for he is now working in conjunction with the Infinite God, and with God all things are possible. In material things he is not lacking, for all things are from this one Infinite Source, and, guided by the Divine Wisdom and sustained by the Divine Power that are now his, in a perfectly natural and normal way he finds that an abundance of all things is his, always in hand in sufficient time to supply all his material needs, and never is there lack when the time comes, if he simply does each day what his hands find to do. Sure always of this unfailing source of supply, he does not give himself to the accumulation and the hoarding of great material possessions, thereby robbing and enslaving the real life.

His thoughts grow more and more into the nature of their Divine Source, and as *thoughts are forces*, and as in the degree that they are spiritualized do they become ever more effective in their operations, so through their instrumentality is he able to mould more and more effectively the every-day conditions of life. And so as he enters into this new life he finds that all things of the outer life fall into line; for *as is the inner, so always and necessarily is the outer*.

These truths will come as new revelations to many, and again to many they will come merely as agents to strengthen and possibly to arouse to renewed life the



realizations of which they are already more or less conscious. In themselves, however, they are not new, *but as old as the world*. They are the real spirit of true Christianity, not, however, of the Christianity that the majority of people conventionally hold, and which in many respects is as radically inconsistent as it is void of results, but the great transcendent truths of our relations with the Father's life that Jesus taught.

They are likewise the real essential spirit of all the great religions of the world, and as all religions in their purity are from the same source, — God speaking through the minds of those who have come into a sufficient union with Him to hear and to interpret His voice, the one universal source of all true inspiration and all true revelation, — so far as their fundamental principles are concerned they are necessarily the same.

And the great spiritual awakening, the beginnings of which we are witnessing in all parts of the world to-day, is evidence that the Divine Breath is stirring in the minds and hearts of men and women in a manner such as it has rarely if ever stirred before. Men and women are literally finding God. They are breaking through the mere letter and form of an old and too-long-held ecclesiastical theorizing and dogmatism into the real vital spirit of the religion of the living and transcendent God. They are waking here and there and everywhere to the realization of their oneness with the living God. Their lives are being completely filled with this realization, and as a consequence they are showing forth the works of God.

They are leaving the old one-day-in-seven, some-other-world religion, and they are finding the joys as well as the practicability of an every-day, this-world religion. They are passing out of the religion of death and possible

glory hereafter into the religion of life and joy and glory here and now, to-day and every day, as well as hereafter and forevermore. With this new religion of the living God and the spiritual power that through it is being made active in their lives, they are moulding in detail all of the affairs of every-day life, proving thereby that their religion is the religion of life. And any system of religion that does not enable its possessor to do this is simply *not* religion, and we should no longer desecrate the word by applying it to any such hollow mockeries.

To this old semblance of religion those who are thus entering into this new and larger religion of life will never return, nor can they, any more than the chick can enter within the confines of its shell again after it has been once born into life. Having found the pearl, the shell for them must perish ; or rather, as it is of no farther value to them, it perishes simply by the operation of natural law. Centred thus in the Infinite, working now in conscious harmony with Divine forces, they ever after rule the world from within.

## III.

## THE MASTER'S GREAT BUT LOST GIFT.

THE conclusions we have arrived at thus far we have arrived at independently of any authority outside of our own reason and insight. It is always of interest as well as of greater or less value to compare our own conclusions with those of others whose opinions we value. It would indeed be a matter of exceeding great interest to compare those we have reached with those of a number whose opinions come with greater or less authority to all the world. Space does not permit this, however, and I propose that we give the balance of our time to the consideration, though necessarily brief consideration, of two such ; one universally regarded as one of the most highly illumined teachers, if not the most highly illumined, the world has ever known, the Christ Jesus ; the other universally regarded as one of the most highly illumined philosophers the world has ever known, the philosopher Fichte. And in these two we have the advantage of the life and teachings of one who lived and taught nearly nineteen hundred years ago, and one who lived and taught a trifle less than a hundred years ago. By selecting these, let it also be said, we have the advantage of two whose lives fully manifested the truth of that which they taught.

In considering the life and teachings of Jesus, let us consider them not as dull expositors interpret and repre-

sent them, but as he himself gave them to the world. Certainly Jesus was Divine; but he was Divine, as he himself clearly taught, in just the same sense that you and I and every human soul is Divine. He differed from us, however, in that he had come into a far clearer and fuller realization of his divinity than we have come into, as indeed his life so clearly indicates. Jesus *was* God manifest in the flesh, as indeed every one must be who comes into the full realization of his oneness with God, as Jesus himself again so clearly taught.

In the thoroughly absurd, illogical, and positively demoralizing doctrine of "vicarious atonement," as given us by early ecclesiastical bodies by perverting the real teachings of Jesus even to the extent of calling interpolations in the New Testament to their aid, I certainly cannot believe. I do, however, believe that it has done more harm to the real teachings of Jesus, has been more productive of scepticism and infidelity, than all other causes combined. It is a doctrine that can be formulated only by those who have no spiritual insight themselves, and who therefore drag the teachings of the Master down to a purely material interpretation because of their inability to give them the spiritual interpretation that he intended they should have.

If his mission was not that of vicarious atonement, not for the purpose of appeasing the wrath and indignation of an angry God and thus reconciling Him to His children, what then was it? Clearly his mission was that of a Redeemer as he gave himself out to be — a Redeemer to bring the children of men back to their Father. And how did he purpose to do this? Clearly by having them consciously unite their lives with the Father's life, even as he had united his. The kingdom of God and His

righteousness is not only what he came to teach, but what he clearly and unmistakably taught.

That he plainly and unequivocally taught his disciples that this was his mission is evidenced by numerous sentences such as the following, occurring all through the gospels: Matt. iv., 23, "Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom," etc. . . . Luke viii., 1, "He went about through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good tidings of the kingdom of God." . . . Luke iv., 43, "But he said unto them: I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to other cities also, *for therefore was I sent.*" . . . Luke ix., 2, "And he sent them forth to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick." . . . Matt. xxiv., 14, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony unto all nations," etc. . . . In more than thirty places in the first three gospels do we find Jesus thoroughly explaining to his disciples his especial mission — to preach the glad tidings of the coming of the kingdom of God; and even before he entered upon his public work, we hear John the Baptist going before him and saying, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

What did Jesus mean by the kingdom of God, or, as he sometimes expressed it, the kingdom of Heaven? As an answer, and an answer better than any speculations in regard to it, let us again take his own words: "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." He taught only what he himself had found, the conscious union with the Father's life as the one and all-inclusive thing. With Jesus from the very first, only in union with God



was there reality. And this life in the Father's life seemed nothing at all marvellous to him; it was perfectly natural, and the only life he knew. Hence he could not say otherwise than that he and the Father were one. His vision was so clear and his already realized Divine life was so full and complete, that he knew that it was utterly impossible for his life to be without the Father's life, as *we* indeed shall know when our vision becomes clear and we enter into the same fully realized union with it.

This great knowledge came to Jesus not through intellectual speculation and still less through any communication from without; it came to him through his own interior consciousness; to all appearances he was born with it. He was born with a peculiar aptitude for discerning things of the Spirit, the same as among us some are born with a peculiar aptitude for one thing and others for other things. But so great was this power naturally in Jesus that in it we may justly say he had a great advantage over most people born into the world, and for this reason was he all the more able and all the greater reason was there for him to be one of the great world Teachers and hence Redeemers. He was indeed Immanuel — God with us.

Jesus, I repeat, never speaks of his life in any other connection than as one with the Father's life.

In reply to a question from Thomas in the fourteenth chapter of John, he says, "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him and have seen him." Philip, who was standing near, unable to comprehend the interior meaning of the Master's words, said unto him: "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Jesus, somewhat surprised

that he had not made himself clear to them, replied : "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip ? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father ; how sayest thou, Show us the Father ? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ? The words I speak unto you I speak not from myself : but the Father abiding in me doeth His work. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me : or believe me for the very works' sake."

But if his especial mission was to preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God, why, I hear it asked, did he claim that only through *him* can we come unto the kingdom, as he indeed says in his conversation with Philip and Thomas immediately preceding the part just quoted : "I am the way, the truth, and the life ; no one cometh unto the Father but by me." Simply because it was the living truth that he brought, which was and evermore is to redeem men by uniting them in mind and heart with the Father. His realized oneness with the Father's life was the way, the truth, and the life, and only by going over the same path that he himself had trod can anyone be truly united with the Father. He found this great vital and redeeming truth nowhere else in the world ; he had to speak as one standing alone, and in this sense he spoke most truly and most literally when he said, "No one cometh unto the Father but by me." And in order to point out his life, his realized oneness with the Father's life, as the way, the truth, and the life, he spoke and indeed had to speak as he did, even at the risk of being misunderstood and having his words taken in a purely material sense, as was the tendency of the spiritual poverty of the age, and indeed as his very disciples so often interpreted his words, as we have but recently seen.

In order to give forth the spiritual teachings which he gave, he had to use the language and the illustrations that their material minds could grasp, and in this way make his teachings doubly liable to a purely material interpretation.

"I am the bread of life," said he to those assembled about him; "your fathers did eat the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which cometh down out of heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the *living* bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: yea, and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world." The Jews taking his words in a material sense argued one with another and said: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus simply reaffirmed his statement, saying: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves. . . . For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." Literally, "My flesh is the true food, and my blood is the true drink. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me."

And many of his disciples, even, when they heard him speaking in this way, said among themselves, "This is a hard saying; who can hear him?" — who can understand him? Jesus, quickly perceiving that they were again dragging his words down to a material interpretation, asked them if what he had just said caused them to stumble, *and then, in order that they get his real meaning*, he said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh



profiteth nothing: the *words* that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life.<sup>1</sup>” And so all except those who are wholly spiritually, not to say even mentally, blind can readily see that what Jesus meant to say, and what he actually did say, was, the words that he spoke to them of his oneness with the Father’s life were the true meat and the true drink, of which, unless a man ate and drank, he had not life in himself, but that these were able to give him life and life eternal.

“He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him.” Or, reversing the expression, He that dwelleth in me and I in him, he it is that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood. “The words that I have spoken unto you, (they) are spirit and (they) are life.” “As the living Father hath sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me.” In the words of another,<sup>1</sup> “To eat his flesh and drink his blood means to become wholly and entirely he himself; to become altogether changed into his person without reserve or limitation; to be a faithful repetition of him in another personality; to be transubstantiated with him, *i.e.*, as he is the Eternal Word made flesh and blood, to become his flesh and blood, and what follows from that, and indeed is the same thing, to become the very Eternal Word made flesh and blood itself; to think wholly and entirely like him, and so as if he himself thought and not we; to live wholly and entirely like him, and so as if he himself lived in our life. As surely as you do not now attempt to drag down my own words, and reduce them to the narrow meaning that Jesus is only to be imitated, as an unattainable pattern, partially and at a distance, as far

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<sup>1</sup> Fichte in “The Way towards the Blessed Life.”

as human weakness will allow, but accept them in the sense in which I have spoken them, that we must be transformed into Christ himself, so surely will it become evident to you that Jesus could not well have expressed himself otherwise, and that he actually did express himself excellently well. Jesus was very far from representing himself as that unattainable ideal into which he was first transformed by the spiritual poverty of the after-ages; nor did his apostles so regard him."

To live in Christ is to live the life he lived, by living in the truth in which he lived and which he taught. The one great truth in which he continually lived was, as we have seen, that only in conscious union with God is there any real life, and therefore we can readily see why he continually gave out, as the Gospel writers tell us so many times he did, that his especial mission was to preach the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. Were it not possible for us to live the same life that he lived, he certainly would not have taught what he taught. This wonderful life of fully realized Divine life Jesus claims not for himself alone, but for all who actually live in the truth that he taught.

It was not to establish any material institution, as the church, that Jesus made his mission, but that the kingdom of God and His righteousness should become actualized and hold sway in the minds and hearts of men — this was his mission, an entirely different thing from the founding of a material organization. Paul and his party, sharing the then prevailing ideas that a material kingdom was to be established, were the originators of the church, not Jesus. We find the word "church" mentioned in the four Gospels by Jesus only once or twice, and then only in an incidental way, while we find the

kingdom mentioned over thirty times in the first three Gospels alone.

As we have already pointed out, had it been his purpose to establish a material organization, then he certainly would not have given it out that something else was his especial purpose. But when the material organization, the church, purely a man-made institution, was established, the early church fathers bringing even interpolations of the Holy Word to their aid in establishing it and some of its various observations, — as modern scholarship has already so clearly discovered, and as it is continually discovering, — the following ages, thinking that they had an institution to keep up, gradually lost, to a greater or less extent, the real spiritual teachings of the Master in their zeal to keep up the form of an institution with which he had nothing to do. And those long and bitter persecutions of the church in the early and middle ages, as well as the long list of crimes sanctioned and committed directly by the church of the middle ages, show that they had not the real truth; for those who live in the truth and have it uppermost in their minds and hearts never persecute — only those who are on either uncertain or false ground, and whose endeavor it is to keep up the form of an institution which they feel would otherwise fall to the ground.

No, true religion has never been known either to persecute or to show intolerance of any kind. Throughout the whole history of the churches' heresies and persecutions, the persecuted party has ever occupied a correspondingly higher and the persecuting party a lower position, the persecuting party continually fighting as it were for life. But the *real truth* which Jesus taught will not cause nor will it even permit persecutions —

hence we find the latter only where there is the lack of the former.

And again, the *real truth* which Jesus taught will not admit of divisions, much less of intolerance, for all real truth is exact truth, and in regard to it there can be no differences, and our modern theologians and our churches of to-day, which get their form and life from the speculations and theories of the former, certainly have not the real truth that Jesus taught, for they are divided in various directions on practically every dogma that they seek to promulgate. And strange as it may seem, heresy trials, with all their absurd attendant features, are not entirely unknown even yet, to-day. But in Jesus' own words, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." And so if the church of to-day wants to stand as a real power in the world, or if indeed it wants to stand at all, it must either get back to, or it must come up, as the case may be, to the *real living truth* that Jesus lived and taught. Unless it does this it will inevitably lose its hold on the people even more rapidly than it is losing it to-day. And certainly the younger ones whom it does not yet hold will not be drawn to it, when they can turn to that which has a thousand-fold more of truth and hence of life-giving power than it has to offer.

That this is not a mere sentiment on our part is evidenced by the wonderful rapidity with which the "New Thought" movement — would that we could designate what we mean without using any term — which has its underlying truth, this conscious union with the Divine Life and the actualized powers attendant upon it as Jesus taught, — hence not a new discovery, but a recovery, — is growing in America, in England, to be brief, in practically every civilized country in the world. Thousands



every year in our own and in other countries are finding in it the joys of the realized Divine Life, and are turning to it from that which but poorly feeds them ; and that this also is no mere sentiment on our part is evidenced by the contents of a letter recently sent by a noted divine in high official standing in the church in England to a noted American preacher, in which he said, in substance, that the church in England is literally honey-combed by the "New Thought" movement, and asked that he be sent a list of the best books that had already appeared in America along the lines indicated.

And so what we need to-day is the same as what the world is eagerly calling for, the life-giving power of the great central truth that the Master taught, and not the various theories and speculations in regard to his origin, his birth, his life, and the meaning of his teachings. And still less, the fabrications of the early fathers in regard to inherited sin, original sin, vicarious atonement, and their believe-and-be-saved doctrine, and the alternative doctrine, fail to believe that which is opposed to all reason, all common sense, all real mercy, as well as all true justice, and be damned, be forever and eternally lost.

Jesus is indeed a lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, but he takes them away by bringing to the world the truth that shall make men free. Hence it is through his life and the truth that he lived and taught, not through his death and the observance of the various ceremonies and forms that have grown up around it. Those who are aided by symbols — and I am aware of the fact that for some many hallowed associations are connected with them — may do well to make use of

them until they outgrow the need for them. But symbols are of value only where the real thing is not, and those who have the real thing no longer have need for symbols. "But the hour cometh," said Jesus, "and now is" (since I have brought you the real spirit of truth), "when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Jesus, according to his own words, did not propose to rest satisfied with the mere *historical belief* that he was the Eternal Word made flesh, and much less, as some phases of theology teach, that reconciliation with the Father, as ordinarily understood, was his purpose. God would adopt no methods in connection with His children that are opposed to their own reason. Nor would He adopt any partial, limited, or tribal methods.

And if, as various theologians would have us believe, that reconciliation with the Father can come about only by a belief in the shedding of the material, physical blood of Jesus, that through it the Father may receive satisfaction for His favor, how, then, in regard to the great company of those who cannot accept a theory so absurd, so illogical, and so opposed to the nature of the living God whom they *know*, and whom they no longer have to speculate and theorize in regard to, to say nothing of the millions upon millions of those who never have heard, and other millions who never can hear, of the man Jesus and the story of his blood "shed for the sins of the world," nine-tenths of whom, for good reasons, would not believe it if they did hear it? No, these fabrications cannot be true, for "in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is ac-



cepted of Him.” And so one may be without connection with any church, and even without connection with any *established* religion, and yet be in spirit, hence in reality, a much truer Christian than hosts of those who profess to be his most ardent followers, as indeed Jesus himself so many times says. “By their *fruits* ye shall know them,” said he. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

That which calls itself Christianity must prove itself, and only that that shows forth in its life the works, the power, the influence — the truth that Jesus’ life showed forth — is the real. “He that believeth on me,” said Jesus, — and shows it by *living* my life, — “the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do because I go unto the Father.” And he who would know by what authority Jesus spoke, let him live the life that he lived and he will then know of the doctrine. Thus and thus only can it be known. We may speculate and theorize in regard to it, but only by living the life can we *know it*.

## IV.

## THE PHILOSOPHER'S RIPEST LIFE THOUGHT.

LET us now see how the truths we have already set forth stand in reference to the thought of the philosopher Fichte. ( Truth, the highest truth, and truth for its own sake, was the one supreme object of his life. And in order to discern this clearly himself, that he in turn might point it out clearly to others, he stood erect and alone, free from connection with any institution, organization, or system of thought that would distort or limit his vision and induce him either intentionally or unintentionally to interpret truth by bending it to suit the tenets of the system of thought or the institution to which he might be, even though inadvertently, bound. ]

It was of Fichte that an eminent English scholar once said: "Far above the dark vortex of theological strife in which punier intellects chafe and vex themselves in vain, Fichte struggles forward in the sunshine of pure thought which sectarianism cannot see, because its weakened vision is already filled with a borrowed and imperfect light."

It is, moreover, always of value to know how the truth that one finds and endeavors to give to others finds embodiment in his own life, for this is the sure and unfailing test of its vitality, if not indeed of its reality. A word or two, therefore, in reference to the life of Fichte may not be inappropriate here, a word or two from the

same eminent English scholar quoted above, the translator of his works from the German to the English, for he knew well his life the same as he knew also his philosophy. "We prize his philosophy deeply," says he; "it is to us an invaluable possession, for it seems the noblest exposition to which we have yet listened of human nature and divine truth; but with reverent thankfulness we acknowledge a still higher debt, for he has left behind him the best gift which man can bequeath to man — a brave, heroic human life."

"In the strong reality of his life,—in his intense love for all things beautiful and true,—in his incorruptible integrity and heroic devotion to the right, we see a living manifestation of his principles. His life is the true counterpart of his philosophy—it is that of a strong, free, incorruptible man."

And now to a few paragraphs of Fichte's thought bearing more or less directly upon the theme immediately in hand. After setting forth in a very comprehensive manner the truth in regard to Being, which he identifies with Life much in the same general manner as we have already endeavored to set it forth, and then after making it clear that by God he means this Infinite Being, this Spirit of Infinite Life, he says:

. . . . .

"God alone is, and nothing besides him, — a principle which, it seems to me, may be easily comprehended, and which is the indispensable condition of all religious insight."

. . . . .

"But beyond this mere empty and imaginary conception, and as we have carefully set forth this matter above, God enters into us in his actual, true, and immediate life,

— or, to express it more strictly, we ourselves are this his immediate Life. But we are not conscious of this immediate Divine Life ; and since, as we have also already seen, our own Ex-istence — that which properly belongs to us — is that only which we can embrace in consciousness, so our Being in God, notwithstanding that at bottom it is indeed ours, remains nevertheless forever foreign to us, and thus, in deed and truth, *to ourselves* is not our Being ; we are in no respect the better of this insight, and remain as far removed as ever from God. We know nothing of this immediate Divine Life, I said ; for even at the first touch of consciousness it is changed into a dead World. . . . The form forever veils the substance from us ; our vision itself conceals its object ; our eye stands in its own light. I say unto thee who thus complainest : ‘ Raise thyself to the standing-point of Religion, and all these veils are drawn aside ; the World, with its dead principle, disappears from before thee, and the Godhead once more resumes its place within thee, in its first and original form, as Life, — as thine own Life, which thou oughtest to live and shalt live.’ ”

In setting forth how universally Divine Being incarnates itself in human Life, he says : “ From the first standing-point the Eternal Word becomes flesh, assumes a personal, sensible, and human existence, without obstruction or reserve, in all times, and in every individual man who has a living insight into his unity with God, and who actually and in truth gives up his personal life to the Divine Life within him, — precisely in the same way as it became incarnate in Jesus Christ.”

Speaking, then, of the great fundamental fact of the truth that Jesus himself perceived and gave to the world, and also of the manner whereby he came into the per-

ception of it, he says : " Jesus of Nazareth undoubtedly possessed the highest perception containing the foundation of all other Truth, of the absolute identity of Humanity with the Godhead, as regards what is essentially real in the former."

" His self-consciousness was at once the pure and absolute Truth of Reason itself, self-existent and independent, the simple fact of consciousness."

. . . . .

Then in showing that Jesus as he is presented to us by the apostle John never conceived of his life in any other light than as one with the Father's Life, he says :

" But it is precisely the most prominent and striking trait in the character of the Johannean Jesus, ever recurring in the same shape, that he will know nothing of such a separation of his personality from his Father, and that he earnestly rebukes others who attempt to make such a distinction ; while he constantly assumes that he who sees him sees the Father, that he who hears him hears the Father, and that he and the Father are wholly one ; and he unconditionally denies and rejects the notion of an independent being in himself, such an unbecoming elevation of himself having been made an objection against him by misunderstanding. To him Jesus was not God, for to him there was no independent Jesus whatever ; but God was Jesus, and manifested himself as Jesus."

To show, then, that this is a universal truth, brought in its fulness, and with a living exemplified vitality, first to the world by Jesus, but by no means applicable to him alone, he says : " An insight into the absolute unity of the Human Existence with the Divine is certainly the profoundest Knowledge that man can attain. Before



Jesus this Knowledge had nowhere existed; and since his time, we may say, even down to the present day, it has been again as good as rooted out and lost, at least in profane literature."

That we must come into the same living realization of this great transcendent truth that Jesus came into, either through his teaching and exemplified realization of it, or through whatever channel it may come, he clearly indicates by the following: "The living possession of the theory we have now set forth — not the dry, dead, and merely historical knowledge of it — is, according to our doctrine, the highest, and indeed the only possible, Blessedness."

"The Metaphysical only, and not the Historical, can give us Blessedness; the latter can only give us understanding. If any man be truly united with God, and dwell in him, it is altogether an indifferent thing how he may have reached this state; and it would be a most useless and perverse employment, instead of living in the thing, to be continually repeating over our recollections of the way. Could Jesus return into the world, we might expect him to be thoroughly satisfied, if he found Christianity actually reigning in the minds of men, whether his merit in the work were recognized or overlooked; and this is, in fact, the very least that might be expected from a man who, while he lived on earth, sought not his own glory, but the glory of him who sent him."

And what in the eyes of Fichte are the results that follow and hence the tests of the genuineness of this higher realization, this True Religion, as he sometimes terms it? His words in this connection are: "True Religion, notwithstanding that it raises the view of those who are inspired



by it to its own region, nevertheless retains their Life firmly in the domain of action, and of right moral action. The true and real Religious Life is not alone percipient and contemplative, does not merely brood over devout thoughts, but is essentially active. It consists, as we have seen, in the intimate consciousness that God actually lives, moves, and perfects his work in us. If therefore there is in us no real Life, if no activity and no visible work proceed forth from us, then is God not active in us. Our consciousness of union with God is then deceptive and vain, and the empty shadow of a condition that is not ours; perhaps the general, but lifeless, insight that such a condition is possible, and in others may be actual, but that we ourselves have, nevertheless, not the least portion in it."

"Religion does not consist in mere devout dreams, I said: Religion is not a business by and for itself, which a man may practise apart from his other occupations, perhaps on certain fixed days and hours; but it is the inmost spirit that penetrates, inspires, and pervades all our Thought and Action, which in other respects pursue their appointed course without change or interruption. That the Divine Life and Energy actually lives in us is inseparable from Religion, I said."

To show, then, how completely at one in his or her consciousness this truly religious man or woman becomes, how his or her own personal will is lost in, and so transmuted into, the Divine Will, as also the calmness and tranquillity with which his or her life forever thereafter flows along, he says: "The expression of the constant mind of the truly Moral and Religious man is this prayer: 'Lord! let but thy will be done, then is mine also done; for I have no other will than this — that thy will be done.'"

"This Divine Life now continually develops itself within him, without hindrance or obstruction, as it can and must develop itself only in him and his individuality; this alone it is that he properly wills; his will is therefore always accomplished, and it is absolutely impossible that anything contrary to it should ever come to pass."

"Whatever comes to pass around him, nothing appears to him strange or unaccountable—he knows assuredly, whether he understand it or not, that it is in God's World, and that there nothing can be that does not directly tend to Good. In him there is no fear for the Future, for the absolute fountain of all Blessedness eternally bears him on towards it; no sorrow for the Past, for in so far as he was not in God he was nothing, and this is now at an end, and since he has dwelt in God he has been born into Light; while in so far as he was in God, that which he has done is assuredly right and good. He has never aught to deny himself, nor aught to long for; for he is at all times in eternal possession of the fulness of all that he is capable of enjoying. For him all labor and effort have vanished; his whole Outward Existence flows forth, softly and gently, from his Inward Being, and issues out into Reality without difficulty or hindrance."

Speaking, then, of how we may at once enter into and live in the full realization of this real life, and also of those who, instead of entering immediately into the Kingdom and thus finding the highest happiness and joy here and now, are expecting to find it in its completeness after the transition we call death, he says: "Full surely indeed there lies a Blessedness beyond the grave for those who have already entered upon it here,

and in no other form or way than that by which they can already enter upon it here in this moment; but by mere burial man cannot arrive at Blessedness — and in the future life, and throughout the whole infinite range of all future life, they would seek for happiness as vainly as they have already sought it here, if they were to seek it in aught else than in that which already surrounds them so closely here below that throughout Eternity it can never be brought nearer to them — in the Infinite. And thus does the poor child of Eternity, cast forth from his native home, and surrounded on all sides by his heavenly inheritance which yet his trembling hand fears to grasp, wander with fugitive and uncertain step throughout the waste, everywhere laboring to establish for himself a dwelling place, but happily ever reminded, by the speedy downfall of each of his successive habitations, that he can find peace nowhere but in his Father's house."

Finally, speaking of how completely doubt and uncertainty are eliminated from the life of him who through the realization of the truth we have set forth becomes thereby centred in the Infinite, he says: "The Religious man is forever secured from the possibility of doubt and uncertainty. In every moment he knows distinctly what he wills, and ought to will; for the innermost root of his life — his will — forever flows forth from the Divinity, immediately and without the possibility of error; its indication is infallible, and for that indication he has an infallible perception. In every moment he knows that in all Eternity he shall know what he shall will, and ought to will; that in all Eternity the fountain of Divine Love which has burst forth in him shall never be dried up, but shall uphold him securely and bear him on forever."

Such, then, in general, are fragments of the thought, and, let it be added, the ripest thought, of one who has exerted perhaps as great a direct influence upon the life of his own immediate as well as succeeding ages as any man who has ever lived. (It is to Fichte that, to a very great extent, the German Empire owes the splendid educational system it has to-day. His thought began to exert its influence at the time when its educational system was falling into a state of chaos, and even the Empire itself by virtue of its recent losses was in a more or less uncertain condition. And, acting to a greater or less extent through the minds of Froebel and Pestalozzi, his thought has aided in giving to the world the truest type of education it has yet seen, that that we know under the name kindergarten, which is slowly but surely working to revolutionize our present educational methods, which stand so sadly in need of a change even so radical.

If the truth and vitality of a man's thought are to be judged by its permanent as well as its immediate influence, surely the thought of Fichte found its life in the realms of the highest truth, through which alone real vitality comes, for it has exerted and is still exerting a most powerful life-giving influence, an influence, indeed, that will never end. ]

## V.

## SUSTAINED IN PEACE AND SAFETY FOREVER.

At what now have we arrived, and what has been the process? From our own reason and insight, independently of all outside authority, we have found the great truth that a living insight into the fact of the essential unity of the human life with the Divine Life is the profoundest knowledge that man can attain to. This as a mere intellectual perception, however, as a mere dead theory, amounts to but little, if indeed to anything at all, so far as bearing fruit in every-day life is concerned. It is the vital, living realization of this great transcendent truth in the life of each one that makes it a mighty moving and moulding force in his life.

Then we have also found that this same great truth was the great central fact of both the life and the teachings of one who comes as authority to practically all the world, the Christ Jesus. That this was the one great truth in which he continually lived, that it was the secret of his unusual insight and power, and that it was also the great truth that he came to bring to the world, he distinctly tells us. That it was not only what he proclaimed he came to teach, but also what he distinctly taught, we have likewise found.

We have found also that the ripest life thought of the philosopher Fichte — he whose spiritual vision was so fully unfolded as to enable him to give to the world



such a remarkable blending of the intellectual and the spiritual in his philosophy — was almost if not identically the same in reference to this great truth, as was also his thought in regard to the life and the power as well as the mission of Jesus.

And when I see day after day the wonderful results that follow in the lives of those who have entered into this living realization, then I know that Jesus knew whereof he spoke when he gave the injunction, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Moreover, I do not believe, but *I know*, that whoever through this realization thus finds the kingdom of God will find his words — that all else will follow — literally and absolutely as well as necessarily true. All will follow in a perfectly natural and normal manner, in full accordance with natural spiritual law.

He who goes thus directly to the mountain top will find all things spread out before him in the valley below. He who thus becomes centred in the Infinite will find that to the same centre whence his inner life issues, all things pertaining to his outer material life will in turn be drawn. The beauty of holiness is one with the beauty of wholeness. To know but the One Life is to live in the fact and the beauty of wholeness; and where wholeness is, there no lack of anything will be found.

If what we ordinarily term our Christian churches, and if the preachers who stand in their pulpits, would fully and universally give themselves to the real message that Jesus gave to the world, then we would find that "the common people" would go to and would hear them



gladly ; there would then be no hard pressing social situation to face, for the people would then have a living knowledge of the one great truth through which all other things would come.

This great transcendent truth, however, that was the very essence of the life and the teachings of Jesus, has been even in our churches as good as rooted out and lost. And shall we conclude that because it is practically lost the greater part of the time and attention of the preacher in the large majority of them is given to the empty, barren, inconsequential themes it is given to ? Or is it because so much time and attention is given to the latter that there is no time left for the former ? However this may be, it certainly is true that to a greater or less extent to-day we find identically the same conditions that Jesus found, and that he continually tried so hard to do away with. "Full well," said he, "ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."

Many a student comes from our theological schools so steeped in theological speculations and in denominational dogmas that he hasn't the slightest conception of what the real mission of Jesus was. What wonder, then, that the church to which he goes soon becomes a dead shell from which the life has gone, into which those in love with life will no longer enter, a church whose chief concern very soon is, how to raise the minister's salary ? But once let these minor and inconsequential, not to say at times petty, foolish, and absurd, things be dropped, and let all time and attention be given to the great central truth that Jesus brought to the world, and we shall find that during the next one hundred years, aye, during the next fifty years, what will then be real Christianity will make more progress than what is now termed Chris-

tianity has made during all the nineteen hundred years it has been in the world. The fact that during all these hundreds of years it has not accomplished more than it has is quite good evidence that something essential is lacking in it.

The real soul-cry even of all Christendom to-day is the same as the injunction given by the native ministers of Japan to a noted representative of the Christian religion as he was leaving there not long ago: "Send us no more doctrines: we are tired of them. Send us Christ." And the only way that Christ can be sent is by sending the great central truth that he brought to the world, a truth so *world-wide*, so *universal*, that, so far even as the so-called various great religions are concerned, in regard to it there can be no differences, for from its very nature it is at the very foundation, indeed the very life essence, of them all. And so it is true in this sense that there is essentially but one religion, the religion of the living God. For to live in the conscious realization of the fact that God lives in us is indeed the life of our life, and that in ourselves we have no independent life, and hence no power, is the one great fact of all true religion, even as it is the one great fact of human life. Religion, therefore, at its purest, and life at its truest, are essentially and necessarily one and the same.

It is only through this living realization of the essential unity of our life with the Father's life that true blessedness, and even true peace and happiness, can be found. The sooner, then, that we come into it, and thus live the life of the spirit, the better, for neither will they come nor can they be found in any other way. There is, moreover, no time either in this form of life, or in any other form, that we can any more readily come into it,

and thereby into all that follows, than we can at this very moment. And when this fountain of Divine Life is once fully opened within us, it can never again be dried up, and we can rest assured that it will at all times uphold us in peace and bear us on in safety. And however strange or unaccountable at times occurrences may appear, we can rest in a triumphant security, knowing that only good can come, for in God's life there is only good, and in God's life we are now living, and there we shall live forever.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For suggestions as to the method of entering into this higher realization, as also for a much fuller portrayal of its results in every-day life, the reader is directed to the volume by the same author entitled, "In Tune with the Infinite, or, Fulness of Peace, Power, and Plenty."

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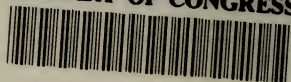








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